

disengage from Afghanistan is a step backward from this goal, and thus does not serve the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

For all of these reasons and more, I hope the President will be open to re-evaluating and revising his withdrawal plan in light of conditions on the ground.

Another hurdle on which our partnership could stumble is our resolve to see it through amid domestic political concerns and short-term priorities that threaten to push our nations apart. For most of the last century, the logic of a U.S.-India partnership was compelling, but its achievements eluded us. We have finally begun to explore the real potential of this partnership over the past two decades, but we have barely scratched the surface, and the gains we have made remain fragile and reversible, as our largely stalled progress over the past few years can attest.

If India and the United States are to build a truly strategic partnership, we must each commit to it and defend it in equal measure. We must each build the public support needed to sustain our strategic priorities, and we must resist the domestic forces in each of our countries that would turn our strategic relationship into a transactional one—one defined not by the shared strategic goals we achieved together but by what parochial concessions we extract from one another. If we fail in these challenges, we will fall far short of our potential, as we have before.

It is this simple: If the 21st century is defined more by peace than war, more by prosperity than misery, and more by freedom than tyranny, I believe future historians will look back and point to the fact that a strategic partnership was consummated between the world's two preeminent democratic powers: India and the United States. If we keep this vision of our relationship always uppermost in our minds, there is no dispute we cannot resolve, no investment in each other's success we cannot make, and nothing we cannot accomplish together.

I thank my beloved friend from Michigan for allowing me to speak, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I thank my good friend from Arizona for not only his remarks but also the thoughtfulness of his remarks on the U.S.-India relationship. I listened to them carefully and am glad to join in and look forward to his report. We have had a historic relationship with India as the two preeminent democracies, and we have a great opportunity to build on this relationship. I know my friend from Arizona has contributed vitally to that effort.

#### IRAQ

Mr. LEVIN. Recent events in Iraq have created great concern. The territorial gains by the ISIL, a violent ex-

tremist group, are not just a threat to Iraq's security but a security challenge to the entire region, and indeed to the United States. By its words and deeds, ISIL has made clear that it is deeply hostile to American interests and to universal values of freedom and human rights. That hostility can easily translate into plans and threats against us.

Faced by these developments, President Obama's decision to send a small number of U.S. military advisers is prudent. They will help assess the situation on the ground, they will support Iraqi efforts to defeat the Islamic militants Iraq faces, and help the Iraqis make best use of the intelligence support we are providing.

The President is right to say that U.S. troops will not return to ground combat in Iraq. The President is also right to say it is not our place to choose Iraq's leaders, because doing so is only likely to feed distrust and suspicion, and there is already too much of that in Iraq and in the Middle East.

What we can do is promote moves toward the political unity that is so essential for Iraq if it is going to weather the crisis and make progress toward a stable, democratic society. The problem in Iraq has not been a lack of direct U.S. military involvement but, rather, a lack of inclusiveness on the part of Iraqi leaders. That is why I believe we should not consider any direct action on our part, such as air strikes, unless three very specific conditions have been met:

First, that our military leaders tell us we have effective options that can help change the momentum on the ground in Iraq. In other words, only if our military leaders believe we can identify high-value targets—that striking them could have a measurable impact on the ability of the Iraqi security forces to stop and reverse the advances of the ISIL on the ground, and that we can strike them with minimal risk of civilian casualties and without dragging us further into the conflict.

Second, any additional military action on our part should come only with the clear public support of our friends and allies in the region—particularly moderate Arab leaders of neighboring countries. The United States has engaged in a comprehensive diplomatic effort to coordinate our response with Iraq's neighbors. If our strategy is to have the effect we want, it is essential that we have broad support in the region.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we should not act unless leaders of all elements of Iraqi society—Shia, Sunni, Kurds, and religious minorities—join together in a formal request for more direct support.

There is an obvious need for Iraqi leaders to form an inclusive unity government for their country's long-term success. But that process is likely to take some time, weeks or even months. But a unified formal statement requesting our further military assistance would be an important signal that

Iraq's leaders understand the need to come together.

It could not only be a sign that additional action on our part would be effective but also could be an important step toward creation of a national unity government.

So far, the signs that Iraqi leaders are prepared to take the steps they need to take are mixed at best. Prime Minister Maliki, who has too often governed in a sectarian and authoritarian manner, delivered a speech recently in which he said national unity is essential to confront ISIL—which is true—but then he signaled little willingness to reach out to other groups. A number of prominent Shia leaders portrayed the conflict in starkly sectarian terms, and Shia militias, including those under the control of Moktada al-Sadr, have marched through the streets of Baghdad. There is little doubt also that Iran is pursuing its own sectarian agenda in the region. Some Iraqi Sunni leaders too have made statements that promote sectarian interests over the common good, and there are also fears that the Kurdish minority may exploit the situation. But on the other hand there have also been some signs that the Iraqi leaders recognize the need to confront the ISIL threat not as Sunnis or Shia or Kurds but together as Iraqis.

Iraq's most influential Shia clerk, Ali Sistani, has called on all Iraqis “to exercise the highest degree of restraint and work on strengthening the bonds of love between each other, and to avoid any kind of sectarian behavior that may affect the unity of the Iraqi nation,” spreading the message that “this army [the Iraqi Army] does not belong to the Shia. It belongs to all of Iraq. It is for the Shia, the Sunni, the Kurds and the Christians.” That is the message from Ali Sistani—a very powerful message and a unifying message in contrast to the messages that should come, for instance, from Mr. Sadr.

The United States has national security interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve those interests unless Iraq begins to move toward the inclusiveness and unity that is necessary if our involvement is to have a positive impact. Put another way, we cannot save Iraqis from themselves. Only if Iraq's leaders begin to unify their nation can help from us really matter.

The ISIL is a vicious enemy. It is also the common enemy of all Iraqis—of all Iraqis and of Iraq's neighbors. If this vicious common enemy cannot unite Iraqis in a common cause, then our assistance, including airstrikes, won't matter. Only a unified Iraq governed by elected leaders who seek to rule in the interest of all their people can stand up to this threat.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

#### REMEMBERING HOWARD BAKER

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, before I begin, I want to pay tribute to